Separating souls

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Separating souls

by FantasyFreak_2

Summary

Dumbledore was lucky enough to meet his soulmate when he was a teenager; well he was lucky until Grindelwald had run off and started a war against the muggles. Unfortunately it is impossible for Soulmates who have met each other to stay apart for longer amounts of time. During the war Grindelwald and Dumbledore somehow manage to steal away often enough to keep their incessant need for each other at bay but after Dumbledore finally manages to beat his lover he can't leave him in Nurmengard while staying in Hogwarts himself.

Years later few people know about Dumbledore's secret in the castle but every time a student has an especially… difficult time with their soulmate Dumbledore introduces them to how even the most problematic relationships can work out.

Featuring an apathetic Tom Riddle, a jealous Severus Snape, a lonely Remus Lupin, a desperate Draco Malfoy, a brilliant Hermione Granger and a battle-hardened Harry Potter.

Notes

You don't have to have seen the Fantastic Beasts movies to understand this story and there are no spoilers for the third film but a rudimentary idea of the Harry Potter story is required.

This is my solace for the fact that the only canon gay ship in the HP universe is a tragic love story so there'll be no point in time were Dumbledore and Grindelwald won't be disgustingly in love with no matter how angry they are at each other.
I also use this story to vent about some... other problems I have with JK and her world so don't be surprised when I start talking about house elves etc.

See the end of the work for more notes

Tea time

Gellert looked just as good as he did every time he and Albus met for their “tea time” as Gellert had teasingly named it. It was mostly spend with both of them naked on a bed but since Albus liked to have his Afterglow with a cup of tea which Gellert had determined as “insanely british” his soulmate always called their little get-togethers by that name.

While hearing him joke around like that and having him call him “Liebling” Albus often forgot they weren’t seventeen anymore. He forgot the war.

Once he left their little rendezvous it would hit him again with full force but until then he tried to keep it out of his mind. Keep the little peace he had until the Ache started again. The Ache they both felt every time they pulled their souls first apart both physically as well as mentally.

Gellert took Albus’ hand in his own and put little kissed down his knuckles. “Stay this time.”

Albus pulled it away. “I can’t.”

“It is our dream I am fulfilling, Liebling!”

“And it was a fool’s notion. The muggles…”

“The muggles would have us dead at their feet if they ever found out about us!” Gellert growled.

“Then we won’t let them find out.”

“Albus.” Grindelwald pushed himself up on his elbows to peer into his lovers eyes. “Aren’t you tired of hiding in a closet?”

Albus pushed him away. “I should go.”

“But…”

Albus had already pushed himself of the bed and started looking for his cloths. Gellert sighed but he saw there was no point in arguing and began reading himself to go out as well. As they parted this time Albus felt it was different than all the times before: The war had gotten bloodier and both sides had become reckless in desperation; soon it would come to an end.

Gellert bend down to bite slightly into the outer shell of Albus ear. “I cannot wait for you join me in Nurmengard once I’ve won this war. We will reign this world together as the fates have decided for us, mein Liebster.”

Albus closed his eyes in pain. “Next time the person you will face on the battle ground is me!”

Fighting Gellert HURT. It hurt as if Albus was tearing his own soul apart – maybe he was.

But Albus fought with everything he had. He fought for the Scramander brothers he had gotten into danger by involving them in his fight against Gellert, he fought for the brave Muggle Jacob Kowalski who would be subjugated under Gellert's rule, he fought for his brother he disappointed uncountable times, he fought for his sister…

Each breath Gellert took Albus wondered he would tell him what he feared to hear: That he knew how Ariana died. That it had been Albus fault. Gellert remained silent.

In the end neither the Elderwand nor his incredible dueling skill saved Gellert: He fell to Albus' last desperate strike. For a second – a terrible second – Albus thought he was dead. Gellert's head connected with the ground with a horrifying thud and blood started collecting around it like a terrible parody of a halo. Albus ran over to his soulmate fearing the worst but then he saw his breast rise and fall and finally he could breathe again.

The Elderwand had fallen out of Gellert's grasp; Albus picked it up and used it to heal his soulmate's head wound. It seemed like he finally won his first of the Deathly Hallows as he had yearned for years ago. It was a hollow triumph; he didn't deserve the wand. Maybe he didn't deserve his soulmate either after what he did to him.

Only then he became aware of the thunderous applause around him. The world celebrated his victory.

Albus felt like death. Maybe he should welcome it instead of further fighting? Maybe he deserved it?

"Professor Dumbledore?"

It took all his energy for Albus to turn his head enough to see the young Newt Scramander stumble into his room.

"Oh god!" Newt rushed over to his bed but stopped shortly in front of it apparently not knowing what the proper further etiquette would be and started wringing his hands. "They told me you were sick but I didn't know how bad it was!"

Albus forced himself to smile. "It isn't so terrible."

“It IS!” Newt got louder and then seemingly realized who he was shouting at. His posture got defensive again as he asked: “Whe… where is Grindelwald?”

Albus frowned; he had never shared the information of his soulbound with Gellert with anyone he didn’t have to. He especially hadn’t burdened the far too young Scramander with something so terrible. “In Nurmengard. He will spend his sentence there until the end of his life as everyone knows.”

“Bu… but…” Newt frowned. “You’re soulmates: You will die if you’re separated from him for too long.”

Albus forced himself to sit up. “How… how did you know that?”

“Humans are not the only ones who have soulmates.” Newt shrugged. “It isn’t so hard to spot.”

“You surprise me every day anew, my dear boy.” Albus couldn’t help but chuckle even as it hurt. “Yes, Gellert is my soulmate.”

“Then he needs to come here as soon as possible!”

“No!” Albus shook his head determinedly. “He is a dangerous dark wizard; we can’t put him near suggestible young minds. The two of us survived the war with only short visits every few weeks I can do it again.”

“The stress on your body and mind will kill you if you continue like that!” Newt protested.

“Then…” Albus was struggling for an answer. “Maybe I should go life in Nurmengard with him.”

“You’re our leader!” Newt shook his head. “The new headmaster of Hogwarts even if you declined the post of minister of magic! You can’t just shut yourself away in a prison cell of your own making!”

“I will not put anyone else in danger for my mistakes!”

Newt frowned. “I’m sorry then Albus but if that is your last word then this is for your own good!”

Albus hadn’t even the time to grab for the Elderwand before the red spell hit him into the chest.

He woke up feeling as if he was lying on clouds. The pain was gone and all he felt was peace with himself and the universe. That was until he noticed that the cushion under his head was moving up and down slowly.

“Your friends have a real problem with doing what they are told, don’t they Liebling?”

Albus huffed. “I guess birds of a feather flock together.” He chuckled. “What a fitting saying considering we’re talking about dear Newt.”

“Oh it wasn’t just him.” Gellert sounded slightly amused. “His brother, his soulmate, dear Queenie and even that Muggle joined him at freeing me out of Nurmengard without getting noticed. It was kind of impressive and quite entertaining at least it was until they put me into this… new cell.”

Dumbledore raised his head up from Gellert’s chest to look around himself. They were still unmistakable in Hogwarts but he had never seen this room before. It looked kind of cozy with a big bed, red carpet and curtains and bright windows showing the grounds around the castle. If he’d had to guess he would say they were in the Room of Requirements.“I didn’t ask them to do this!”

“I know. The older Scramander brother complained at the younger one quite a lot about that fact.” Gellert answered. “You just wanted to let me fade away at Nurmengard to fulfill you incessant desire to be a martyr.”

“I… I would have come to you before you came to any harm!” Albus protested. “I would have…” He buried his head in Gellert’s shoulder. “…would have stayed with you in that cell for the rest of our lives if I needed to.”

Gellert used his chance to bite lightly into Albus shoulder in punishment. “Incessant desire to martyr yourself you Dummkopf!” But he sounded less angry than before.

Albus couldn’t help but smile. “I don’t know what that means.”

“If they’d define it in an encyclopedia they would put a picture of you in there.”

“Aha.” Albus murmured. “I guess you already tried to doors.”

“I did.”

“I guess they wouldn’t open.”

“Correct.”

“Then we’ll have to wait until my friends return to free at least me from this prison.”

“Probably.”

Albus pushed himself up to crawl further on Gellert’s chest and peer down into his mismatched eyes. “Can you think of anything that could keep us entertained until then?”

Gellert put a hand into Albus' hair to pull him down into a kiss. "I could think of one or two things."

"The entire faculty body as well as several of your friends have joined together in making a room that is absolutely impenetrable." Professor McGonagall told a slack-jawed Albus. "Especially the help of Mr. and Mrs. Flamel as well as the knowledge of Mr. Scramander of putting big habitats in small spaces helped us a lot."

"You build a prison cell into the headmaster's office?"

"We only took a bit of the space of the headmaster's living quarters and used it to do what we needed to do."

"You build a prison cell into the HEADMASTER'S OFFICE?"

"It seemed like the castle itself was quite keen on the change we made." Minerva continued with unbroken professionalism; she didn't seem faced by Albus bewilderment at all.

"But… why?"

"Professor Dumbledore…" Minerva's gaze became a little warmer. "Albus, you are an important part of this school and we protect what is ours."

Then she turned around and left.

Gellert wasn't too happy at his new living arrangements and he paced up and down his quite roomy cell for years to come. There were also several escape attempts - one more elaborate than the other. He never made it far; it was like the castle itself didn't want to let him go.

With the decades he became calmer, more manageable. Albus slept in the same bed as him every night and he let him help with the running of the school as well letting him do his own

research as long as it didn't involve a wand. It would have been a shame to let a brilliant mind like Gellert's rot away.

On occasion Minerva or one of the other teachers came by to talk to Gellert or the younger of the Scramander brother's came to visit with his suitcase. Apparently Newt had a bit of a bad conscious for keeping anyone inside for decades even if it was a Dark Lord and letting Gellert around his habitats was his way of giving him some "fresh" air. Gellert was certainly not complaining even though he wasn't much of an animal lover. On occasion Albus had been convinced to let his lover outside under strict supervision but after a certain experience in the Black Forest (Gellert's former home) he had gotten very careful about it.

Only very few people knew of Gellert's imprisonment in the castle and Albus aimed to keep it that way but that didn't mean he never let one of his children meet his soulmate:

The first one was a young woman who fell in despondency because her soulmate had rejected her. She was nearly desperate enough to try her hand on love potions before Albus found out and intervened. He let her meet Gellert to prove that even in the most desperate of circumstances soulmates wouldn't forsake each other as long as they didn't betray each other in the worst way. She kept the love potions to herself and ten years later she and her soulmate got married.

Similar situations happened through the years but Gellert was clearly disinterested in each of those occasions.

Until HE came...

Gellert immediately felt there was something different in the young man in front of him with his strikingly beautiful face and cold eyes.

The boy looked at him through the magical shield that kept Gellert inside his cell with a mixture of awe and loathing. "That is…"

"Gellert Grindelwald." Albus confirmed. "Gellert, that is Tom Riddle."

"Hello Tom." Gellert greeted with a pleasant smile.

The boy grimaced but immediately tried to hide it behind a charming smile. "Hello Mr. Grindelwald. I read a lot about you. Your work in ancient runes was quite incredible."

"It still is." Gellert answered. "It just is published under another name."

Riddle looked him up and down calculating then he turned to Albus with a pointedly confused face. “But Professor Dumbledore, Sir, why did you bring me here to meet him?”

“Gellert is my soulmate.” Albus answered with his fatherly smile but Gellert knew his lover good enough to see the suspicion behind his façade. “I couldn’t help but notice your research into separating a soulbond.”

“Oh.” Riddle looked crestfallen – what a good actor and that at such a young age. “You have to understand it was purely theoretical. After she rejected me like that, I was just…”

“Angry?” Albus asked kindly. “It’s an understandable feeling, nobody likes getting rejected and in such a blatant manner too. Pureblood families tend to have… strange ideas about love and marriage. But you have to understand that the path you are following is a dangerous one. Separating a soulbond means ripping your soul apart; that is the darkest kinf of magic. Tread very carefully.”

“After reading those books I understand that now too, Sir.” Riddle quickly reassured. “It was just the passing fancy of a heartbroken child, Sir.”

Albus sighed probably recognizing the lie to. “I brought you here to show you that no matter how desperate your situation to your soulmate may seem love can always prevail.” His hand went through the magical shield without any problem and took hold of Gellert’s.

Gellert just continued starring at the boy who had his eyes cast down as if in shame but under his eyelashes he could only see disgust.

As Albus and Riddle left Gellert’s eyes fell on the mirror next to him where he could see the corpse of a pretty girl lying on the ground with a black shadow hovering over her. It seemed like Albus hadn’t succeeded in changing Riddle’s mind after all.

Albus starred into the picture showing the lifeless body of his former student in his Pensieve. “He killed her.”

Gellert shrugged unmoved by the death but saddened by his soulmate’s horror. “We both expected it, didn’t we?”

“He ripped his own soul apart to kill his own soulmate.” Albus buried his face in his hands. “How could he…?”

Gellert stepped closer and hugged Albus from behind. “Can’t you get him arrested now that he showed his cards?”

“There is no proof it was murder.” Albus answered.

“But he survived his soulmate’s murder.” Gellert pointed out. “That is impossible without involvement of black magic.”

“He says the fact that he is such a powerful wizard saved him.” Albus answered mournfully. “He uses it to gain even more followers. Gellert, I’m not sure I will survive another war.”

“Hush darling.” Gellert put his lips on the crown of Albus hair. “I won’t let any harm come to you.”

Another wizard war might give Gellert the chance to finally escape his chains and he mostly liked the ideas Riddle was promoting but if this baby-Dark Lord even thought of touching his Albus he would RIP HIM APART.

Visitors

Chapter Summary

Gellert gets to know Remus, Severus, Harry and Draco

The inevitable war started and Gellert could see the hair turning grey on his soulmate's head. It was a harsh war with great casualties on both sides but Gellert's visions combined with Albus strategies made sure their side kept the upper-hand.

Still Gellert was mostly kept away from what was going on outside of his comfy cell. Sometimes Gellert wondered if Albus was worried that meeting Gellert had made Riddle into the Dark Lord he was today because for long years his soulmate didn't bring him any other students to talk. That was until the second Wizarding War had raged for nearly a decade.

The young boy –he looked not even eleven – that stumbled behind Albus looked like the universe had dealt him the worst cards even in such young years. His clothes were dirty and full of holes and his face was adorned by a big scar. But the most prevalent thing Gellert noticed about him was the deep and utter loneliness in his eyes.

"Pro… professor." The boy stuttered. "I really don't think I should come up here with…" His gaze fell on Gellert and he froze. "Wh… who is that?"

"That is my soulmate, Remus." Albus answered his face betraying his desperation to save the newest stray he had found.

"Why…" The boy rubbed his hands nervously. "Why is he in a cage?"

"Because he is more dangerous than you could ever imagine." Albus answered softly.

Remus frowned. "But why is he in Hogwarts then?"

"Because this school doesn't reject people for just being dangerous." Albus hunkered down next to Remus so their eyes were at the same height. "You said you didn't want to come to Hogwarts because you fear you are too dangerous for the other students. I assure you if we kept Gellert Grindelwald contained for nearly half a decade we can make sure you won't hurt anyone either."

The boy's mouth fell open in shock and he turned to Gellert with fear in his eyes.

This was a lot more entertaining than the usual visitors Albus brought with their boring teenage lover quarrels. Gellert looked the child up and down. "Let me guess, Albus: This is a young werewolf?"

Remus flinched backwards hard enough he nearly fell.

“Oh don’t worry,” Gellert smiled kindly. “I’m far better at reading people than most wizards. If I needed so long to recognize the signs I doubt any teenage witch or wizard will figure out your secret.” He went unto one knee in front of Remus so he wouldn’t loom over him while talking. “Should I tell you a little secret? You aren’t the monster here.”

Remus looked at him with wide eyes as if hypnotized and asked with a small voice: “I’m not?”

“No.” Gellert answered. “They are.” He looked out the wide window his cell had been provided with. “The muggles who force us – force you to hide yourself. If it weren’t for the fear in our society that a wild werewolf will reveal us to them we wouldn’t…”

“GELLERT!” Albus pushed himself in between Remus and his soulmate and glared at him.

Gellert only gave a noncommittal shrug back. “You know of my opinion in those things.”

“Yes.” Albus answered. “And you know what I think off talking to my students about it.”

“I thought this was a school.” Gellert looked around himself pointedly. “Shouldn’t all viewpoints be heard and discussed then?”

“We will talk about this – LATER!” Albus took Remus at his little hand and pulled him out of the room.

Even after a lengthy discussion – lecture – Albus remained angry at Gellert and it took a few further years before he brought the next visitor: His school uniform was unkept, his hair oily and he was fuming with anger.

Albus was more or less dragging him along with him while the child shouted in anger: “Let me go, I have nothing more to say to this!”

“Maybe but I think another perspective will do you some good.” Albus answered and finally let go of the child.

With a frown he pushed the oily hair out of his eyes and for the first time his eyes fell on Gellert. It was kind of impressive how fast the occlumentic shields SLAMMED down behind his suspicious eyes. “Who are you?”

Curious creature even though Gellert couldn’t quite get over his… abhorrent appearance. On the other hand he had dealt with similar from Credence years ago. On that thought this boy reminded him a lot of Credence, same dark hair and eyes of a dog that been hit one too many times by someone it trusted. A powerful rabid dog; it might be useful to get him on his side.

“My name is Gellert.”

The boy cocked his head and bit his lip. He looked from Albus to Gellert and back again. “Grindelwald?”

Oh, clever thing. “The same.”

The boy turned back to Albus. “Why… why did you bring me here?”

“Gellert is my soulmate, Severus.” Albus answered and Severus gasped in shock. “I brought you here to talk about your own problems with soulmates.”

“My problems with soulmates?” Severus laughed in a disbelieving tone. “My problem with soulmates is that I DON’T HAVE ONE! My problem is that NOBODY LOVES ME!”

With a loud bang the vase on the small table next to the cell exploded.

“That isn’t true.” Albus disagreed quietly. “Lilly loves you.”

“She doesn’t.” Severus started to shake his head violently from one side to the other. “She doesn’t, she doesn’t, she doesn’t! She is POTTER’S soulmate.” He spit the name out with such vitriol as if it was poison.

“That doesn’t mean she loves you any less.” Albus said.

Severus sobbed. “How couldn’t it? He hates me; he always hated me! And once she accepts him she’ll hate me too.”

“Severus…” Albus only needed to bend down slightly to be on eye-level with the teenager who apparently recently had hit his growth-spurt. “There were quite a lot of friends I had that Gellert didn’t… especially like.”

“Oh yes.” Gellert agreed. “That muggle Kowelski or whatever he was called…”

“And I never let that stop me from being their friends.” Albus continued.

“…the two Scramander brothers…”

“Lilly won’t let James’ opinion stop her either.”

“…the Goldstein sisters proved to be quite annoying too…”

“Or does Lilly seem like someone so weak-willed to you that she just abandons her brother like that?”

“…oh yes your brother, I can’t stand your brother either!”

“Thank you, love!” Albus finally interrupted Gellert. “I think we got the point.”

“But you just have so many annoying friends!” Gellert smirked back.

Albus just sighed.

Meanwhile Severus starred at Albus as if he had hung up the moon. “Do you really think Lilly we still love me even with…” He grimaced. “Even with HIM?”

Albus smiled back. “I’m quite sure of it as long as…” He put a hand on Severus shoulder. “… you don’t abandon her either. I know how young Slytherins talk about muggleborns these days. Don’t start thinking those thoughts, OK?”

Gellert raised an eyebrow. “Your friend is muggleborn?”

Severus frowned at him. “Yes. Is that a problem?”

Gellert chuckled. “No, although I would do my best to get her away from that family as fast as possible. Dangerous people those muggles who knows what they’ll do to their magical child.”

“GELLERT!” Albus was incensed and tried pushing Severus out the door.

But teenager had other ideas and struggled to turn back to Gellert. “But you think Muggleborns should be a part of our world?”

“Of course.” Gellert smiled back. “They are our sisters and brothers chosen by magic itself. Whoever tells you to shun them will bring only the downfall to our society.”

“Oh.” Severus looked thoughtful as Albus pushed him out of the door.

Albus was angry at him for a very long time after that but soon time quenched that fire. The war took a toll on Albus and it still hadn’t given Gellert means to escape. He did his best to help soulmate with his strategizing but the stress was warring them both down.

And then one day Albus came into the cell, put his arms around Gellert and started sobbing.

“Shhh,” Gellert had no idea what was going on but consoling his soulmate was the most immediate priority right now. “Mein Liebling, hush now. What happened that is so terrible to reduce you to this state?”

It took awhile before Albus was calm enough to speak again. “Tom’s dead.”

Gellert blinked. “The war is over? Isn’t that… a good thing?”

“So are Lilly und James.” Albus whispered.

“Lilly and James?” Gellert repeated. “Not the prophesized child?”

“No.” Albus answered. “They say he was the reason Tom died.”

“But you don’t believe that?”

“I think…” Albus swallowed hard. “I think Lilly put herself in between Tom and Harry.”

“Ah.” Gellert nodded. “The wild magic a desperate sacrifice of a mother can unwind shouldn’t be underestimated. I guess Severus is quite saddened.”

“He is beside himself in grief.” Albus answered. “I think he blames himself for not being a better spy even though he brought us immeasurable information since he left school and started working for us.” He leaned further into Gellert’s embrace and whispered. “But it was my fault.”

“Nein, darling how could it be your fault?” Gellert immediately reassured him. “The Fidelius charm was…”

“I found the second Hallow.” Albus spoke quiet enough Gellert nearly missed it.

“You did what?”

“I found the cloak.” Albus answered and sobbed again. “James had it – it was a family heirloom. I asked to lend it only a few days ago and…” He started crying again and could barely continue. “The cloak… can keep death away… if he had had it… would he… would they…?”

“Shhh, Liebling.” Gellert tried to suppress his triumph over knowing where two of the Hallows were for now. “It wasn’t your fault. They were betrayed; Riddle knew where they were and probably caught them completely off guard. How likely is it that they would have the cloak with them at all times in their own home?”

Albus started to calm down. “I… I mean…”

“Exactly.” Gellert started gently pushing his soulmate. “Come my heart, let’s get you to bed to calm down.”

“That Potter boy has an astonishing talent for getting in trouble.” Gellert remarked. “It seems like every end of term I can look forward to a new blood-curdling adventure story from him.”

“He has me worried.” Albus admitted.

“I’d love to meet him.” Gellert said.

Albus gave him a scathing look. “What, so you can fill his head with talk about how awful Muggles are?”

“From the tales Severus gives me it seems to me like he wouldn’t need much convincing.” Gellert smirked. “What gave you the bright idea to leave him with Lilly’s MUGGLE sister? What did you think would happen?”

Albus looked away. “Not every muggle is like you say, you know?”

“No only most.” Gellert said in a scathing tone. “Be happy he can have a few happy years living with Remus and this godfather of his before he needs to be lead to slaughter like a lamb.”

Gellert had been caught by surprise at learning how the young werewolf he once knew had kept his soultmate hidden away from the world for all those years but maybe he shouldn’t have been so surprised. He’d have done the same to keep Albus away from Azkaban.

Albus buried his face in his hands. “We don’t know if Harry really needs to die.”

“He’s a Horcrux.” Gellert said even-tempered. “Riddle split his soul not only to rid himself of his soulmate but also to cling to life and the Potter boy has to suffer for it.”

“Maybe we’ll find a way to destroy the Horcrux without killing him?” Albus sounded like he was desperately clinging to that hope.

“Maybe.” Gellert said. “Or we find us with another young hero with a soulbond to a Dark Lord.”

“It’s barely a distorted copy of one.” Albus scoffed.

“And yet you’ll have to decide which is more important yet again, Albus: Riddle’s death or Potter’s life.”

“You… you are what?” Gellert didn’t remember when he had laughed so hard the last time that his rips were starting to hurt.

“It isn’t funny!” Albus glared at him but Gellert saw the corners of his mouth rise slightly.

“You are a wanted criminal.” Gellert laid helplessly on his bed still laughing hysterical. “From the MINISTRY!”

“Would you stop laughing about my misery?” Albus pouted – oh and how cute it looked. “Fudge and Umbridge got me banned from Hogwarts!”

“Oh yes,” Gellert looked around his cell pointedly, slowly calming down from his laughing fit. “You will never see Hogwarts again.”

“Well if Fawkes hadn’t been there I wouldn’t have been able to return to you.”

“And now…” Gellert put his arms around Albus who was sitting on the bed next to him. “… you can’t leave me.”

“I mean I still need to organize meetings for the order on occasion…” Albus disagreed.

“Don’t destroy my dreams, Liebes.” Gellert pulled him down to a kiss.

Albus did have to leave occasionally but it still was the most time they had together in years and Gellert felt saddened after Albus was exonerated. It was fun being wanted criminals together.

“I thought I wasn’t supposed to meet him?” Gellert asked as he considered the boy wonder he had heard so much about. The child didn’t look very impressive but Gellert had long ago learned not to underestimate people for their appearance. The younger Scamander boy had given him trouble one too many times for that.

“You weren’t.” Albus answered. “But things change. Severus has… convinced me of that Harry is old enough to hear all the information I have.”

“All?” Gellert asked curiously. “Even…?”

“Even that I have to die.” Harry confirmed.

“You don’t seem that worried.” Gellert said.

“Isn’t the first time I’m faced with certain death,” The boy sounded like more of a hardened soldier than most of Gellert’s soldiers had been once upon a time. It would be of worth to get him on his side. “won’t be the last.”

“So why have you brought him here, Albus?” Gellert asked.

“Because you’re the biggest secrets I kept from him.” Albus answered then he bit his lip. “And because he has a right to see how I answered the question if I would die to kill a Dark Lord.”

“But it’s different, Professor.” Harry shook his head. “You love him; he’s your soulmate.”

Albus shook his head. “That doesn’t change…”

Harry frowned. “You were the one who said my mother’s sacrifice saved me when I was a baby; her love protected me. How can you say your love is worth any less?”

“I…” Albus swallowed and looked away, one of the few moments Gellert had seen his soulmate speechless.

“Thank you Sir,” Harry said. “For showing me what possibilities I have. But Voldemort isn’t my soulmate and if I have to die to save my true soulmate I will!”

And he left.

Since the summer holidays started Albus had been in Hogwarts less and less, always in search for Riddle's Horcruxes. Gellert started to daydream of killing Riddle himself just so he could finally have some proper time with his soulmate again.

One of those times Albus came back stumbling into his living space with his eyes locked on a ring. Gellert frowned: Something was very wrong with that piece of jewelry but he couldn't quite put his finger on what.

"I found it, Gellert." Albus murmured more to himself even though he used his soulmates name. "I finally found it."

"Found what Albus?" Gellert asked not taking his eyes of the ring. It reminded him of a set of cursed bracelets he had once come across in Germany.

"Don't you recognize it?" Albus held the ring up into the light. "It's the final Hallow, we finally have found them all." He blinked. "I can finally talk to Ariana again. I can apologize…"

He started trying to put the ring on his finger.

"Albus?" Gellert tried to get to his soulmate but the magic field didn't let him. "Albus that is a trap. ALBUS STOP!"

But his soulmate didn't even seem to hear him, still fixated on the ring that was nearly on his finger by now.

"NOOOO!" A rush of magic broke out of Gellert and the magical field started wavering, flickered and for a second it failed. The magic slammed into Albus and threw him of his feet. He flew into the wall behind him, the ring falling out of his hand and onto the ground, rolling away.

Gellert tried rushing to his soulmate but the magic field slammed back with full force and then the magical exhaustion hit him hard enough he went to his knees. Black spots started to appear in his vision and the room felt like it was shifting around him.

"Gellert." Albus whispered weakly from the other side of the room.

"Don't put the ring on, Albus." Gellert could barely keep his consciousness by now but he needed to stay awake a little longer. "It's a trap! Promise me to…!"

"Gellert!" There were sounds of Albus trying to get back on his feet.

“Promise me, Albus!” Gellert couldn’t keep himself on his knees anymore and fell forward on the ground. “Don’t leave me, meine Seele.”

“GELLERT!” Suddenly Albus was kneeling beside him, ring forgotten in a corner of the room. “I promise you I won’t touch it. Please stay awake until I can have a healer in here!”

But Gellert was already slipping away in unconsciousness.

It wasn’t very often that Gellert was visited by someone who wasn’t at least in the company of Albus. Apart from Minerva, Newt and on occasion Remus coming by the most frequent visitor he had was Severus who was both on the best terms with Grindelwald while also having access to him.

This was the first time he came in company apart from Albus though. He had a young, blond boy gripped by one ear and was pulling him into the room.

“Ow, ow, ow, uncle Severus, STOP IT!”

“I will stop this once you finally get it into your stupid head what you are about to do.” Severus snarled.

“I have no idea what you are…” The boy looked up and saw Gellert in his cell. His ashen face whitened even further and he took a step back. “You said you wouldn’t tell anyone.”

“And I won’t.” Severus answered. “But even if I did, you should be able to see that this man has very little opportunity to tell your secrets to anyone else.”

A bit of a white lie since there were few things Gellert would lie to Albus about but on the other hand was it very likely that Albus already knew whichever secret Severus was talking about.

“Draco, this is Gellert Grindelwald.” Severus introduced them.

“Oh, is that your godson?” Gellert asked mildly interested. “A pleasure to finally meet him.”

“Wh… what is he doing in Hogwarts? In here?” Draco looked around the headmaster’s chambers.

“He is Professor Dumbledore’s soulmate.” Severus answered.

Gellert didn’t think it was possible for the boy to become even more ashen but it seemed like even in his old age there were still surprises he could discover.

“He is…” Draco whispered while staring at Gellert with wide eyes.

“Do you see now?” Severus asked. “Do you see who you will anger if you continue with what you’re doing?”

“Oh.” Gellert smiled. “Is he the young man who made those unfortunate attempts on Albus’ life?” He let his eyes get a shade colder but he if he honest with himself he wasn’t very angry with the kid who hadn’t even come close to being a threat to Albus. It reminded him more of a kitten trying to strike at an elephant… kind of adorable more than threatening.

Draco swallowed hard. “I… I have no choice.” He looked at his godfather pleadingly. “He is going to kill me, kill my mother.”

“Ask for help.” Severus said.

“I don’t trust them.” Draco denied. “I have been nothing but horrible to your side of the war why would they help me?”

“You’re Potter’s soulmate.” Severus took hold of Draco’s shoulders so he couldn’t turn away. “He will do anything to keep you safe.”

“He hates me.” Draco whispered.

“Oh trust me.” Gellert said conversationally. “That doesn’t mean he wouldn’t do anything to safe you. I have experience with that.”

Draco looked from Gellert to Severus and back before finally giving a jerky nod.

Conspiring

Chapter Summary

Gellert gains allies and a possible escape route.

“Thank you for helping my soulmate.” Gellert had no idea how Harry had gotten into the room without either Albus or Severus accompanying him.

“This is a bad idea.” A girl complained as she stepped through the door after the boy.

Oh, Harry brought companions how interesting. Gellert put his most pleasant smile on. “Hello Harry. It was my pleasure to help dear Draco through his troubles.”

Harry raised an eyebrow. “Sure it was. I was talking with uncle Remus and uncle Sev about you.”

Another, taller boy with bright red hair followed the girl with the bushy hair into the room.

Gellert kept his eyes on Harry. “And what did they tell you?”

“To be careful around you.” The boy answered. “Told me you could be quite manipulative but also very helpful under the right circumstances.”

“Are these…” Gellert looked around the room. “the right circumstances?”

“Hopefully.” Harry answered. “Those are Hermione Granger,” he nodded to the girl. “And Ron Weasley.” He nodded to the redhead.

“Lovely meeting you.” Gellert looked at them curious.

Hermione crossed her arms in front of her chest. “I still think this is a waste of time, Harry. He’s just another Voldemort!”

“And what does it mean to be like Voldemort?” Gellert enquired.

She stared at him with an angry glare. “You want to see me dead.”

“Hardly, Mrs. Granger.” Gellert answered. “I remember hearing and seeing a lot of you and I’ll assume you’re talking about your blood status.”

“I am.”

“Young witches and wizards like you are gifts given by magic itself to keep our society from sinking into oblivion.”

Hermione frowned with clear mistrust in her face. “But my parents are muggle and you want to rule over the muggles.”

“They are and I want to.” Gellert agreed. “But you’re not a muggle.”

Hermoine blinked in surprise. Harry took his chance in stepping forward. “We think Dumbledore isn’t doing what needs to be done.”

Gellert raised an eyebrow. Albus’ prodigy was the last person he would have expected to say that. “In fighting Riddle?”

“In doing what needs to be done afterwards.” Harry answered. “He beat Voldemort already once and afterwards my uncle Remus still wasn’t accepted in our world. Hell, he needs to fear an attack if someone ever finds out what he is because the ministry certainly won’t defend him.” Harry’s eyes had a fever in them. “We had decades and the werewolves, goblins, centaurs, giants…”

“And the house elves!” Hermione added.

“And the house elves…” Harry confirmed. “they are all still subjugated by us. If we made our peace with them years ago we wouldn’t have the problem that they are allying themselves with Voldemort.”

“In Albus defense: the Ministry wouldn’t let him do what he actually wanted to do.” Gellert pointed out with a smile already knowing how this talk would continue.

“Then the ministry needs to go down.” The redhead talked for the first time.

“Now this is getting interesting.” Gellert leaned forward. “I’ll assume you want my help in that enterprise since you’re here talking about it.”

“Nothing is decided yet.” Hermione stepped in. “I’m still against this plan considering you want to enslave muggles.”

“Enslave is a hard word.” Gellert made his voice as gentle as he could. “I just want to give wizardkind their proper place. One day soon the muggles will find out about us and if they get to take the first attack on us I fear the devastation they’ll bring down before we can defend ourselves.”

“I agree.” Harry surprised Gellert once again. “We need to take the first step and if this leads to war it would better be on our terms. I do not agree with your aim though.”

“As long as peace is an option we should aim for it.” Hermione said.

“Peace?” Gellert laughed. “I don’t know how much you know about my ability to see the future.” He saw Hermione grimace – she was apparently more of a skeptic to fortune telling then “I’m sure it was mentioned in some history book or another. Well Albus asked me to keep an eye on dear Mr. Potter over there and I have to say it was barely a chore - so many interesting stories happening around him. Interesting as well that you’re nearly always there;

especially for most of the holidays." Hermione bit her lip at his word and looked away. "Troubles at home? Do your parents not understand your heritage? Fear it?"

"I…" Hermione swallowed and resolutely looked up at Gellert. "But they never really understood me - even long before I became a witch. Maybe an intellectually gifted child was too much for them."

"My dear, there was never a time you weren't a witch." Gellert disagreed gently. "And if I had won the war I would have made sure you would have grown up properly. You and…" He looked pointedly at Harry who's face immediately closed off.

"I think we could come to an agreement then." The redhead stepped forwards. "We can't win this war and push for what we want without you. And you can't… well" he pointedly looked around. "…do anything without us. After we had several talks about our and your aims we would be willing to free you… if you can tell us how to do that."

Oh how delightful this situation was turning out. "The magic field has been created by several people – most of who have died in either one of the wars or an illness or another." Gellert explained. "The Flamels have died several years ago after what happened with the stone." He looked at Harry with a raised eyebrow who looked uncomfortable. "That only leaves Newt Scramander and Minerva McGonagall to deal with. Well them and Albus has put a lot of his magic into the field after it was created."

"Deal with…?" Hermione repeated. "I REFUSE to hurt someone innocent for your entertainment…"

"And I'm not asking you." Gellert interrupted. "We just need to make a situation where all three of them are magically exhausted."

Ron chuckled. "We can send my sister after McGonagall, she isn't as good as pranks as Fred and George but they taught her a lot. I'm sure she'll think of something."

"But Mr.Scramander?" Hermione asked. "He is just an old man who lives with his wife and rescue animals in quiet retirement, I'm not sure I even want to force him in a situation where he would exhaust himself."

Ron tipped himself against the chin several times as he thought before his eyes brightened. "The basilisk down in the Chamber of Secrets! It's dead so no longer a danger but I'm sure he would love to examine it. How often do you see a grown basilisk even if it's dead?"

"And Dumbledore?" Harry asked.

All three turned to Gellert.

Gellert held up his hands. "I fear we'll need to wait for the right situation to exhaust Albus. I can exhaust him in other ways." ("Ewww" Harry complained. "Too much information") "but I can't force him to use his magic in here."

“So we wait.” Ron confirmed. “And once Dumbledore is in a situation that exhausted him we have to move fast with McGonagall and Scramander.”

“So,” Hermione put her hands on her hips. “I guess it’s time to talk about our terms now.”

Hermione Granger, Gellert learned, was a very thorough witch. Not only did she keep every relevant detail to which they had agreed on paper she also knew quite a lot about the different kinds of magic that could bind Gellert to his word. She didn’t know everything – a lot of the darker magic Gellert had learned himself would have helped her greatly – but for a sixteen year old muggleborn it was astounding. As always Gellert felt affirmed in his belief that magic send the witches and wizards born to muggles as a way to strengthen the magical bloodlines. If only Albus would let him rescue them from likely mistreatment by their families.

Well Albus wasn’t the only one who didn’t agree with this idea of his. Hermione also liked to argue with Gellert about his believes a lot and today was another one of those days she had snug in alone to his room while everyone – especially Albus – were busy elsewhere.

“What about wizards or witches who’s soulmate is a muggle?” Hermione continued their argument.

Gellert immediately thought of Queenie who in the end had betrayed him for her muggle lover. “It hardly ever happens.” He tried to arbitrate.

Hermione didn’t look impressed with his answer. “And if it happens only once every hundred years we need a regulation for it and I refuse to leave it as: I guess they’ll have to die.”

“Once upon a time I would have answered you in that way.” Gellert admitted. “But over time I guess… I learned a bit.” If he hadn’t be so steadfast in this one, ultimately needlessly strict belief he wouldn’t have lost Queenie. And in the end, hadn’t his bond to Albus shown what a soulbond can do to keep you together even if your beliefs ripped you apart? “I would be ready to allow a soulbond to a muggle to exist as long as the muggle hasn’t proven himself dangerous.”

“Sounds good.” Hermione noted it down.

Gellert couldn’t help but smile at the young witch. “What are you really fighting for Hermione?”

She hesitated. “For the house elves.”

“Why?”

“Because…” She bit her lip. “Because everyone believes it is their destiny to be enslaved, that they should be happy… it’s their purpose. Everyone believes that even themselves.”

“And that bothers you?”

“They used to tell me that in school to.” Hermione mumbled. “In muggle school, they told me I would never amount to anything, that I was just a stupid know-it-all.” She huffed. “I guess they told me that in Hogwarts too. That I was worth less no matter how hard I worked. That I was a mudblood.”

The young thing reminded him of himself – once when he and Albus had been sharing their grand ideas. Once when they were still young and unburdened by the world. “Hermione Granger, from the deepest bottom of my heart, I believe you will accomplish great things.”

She smiled at him with watery eyes. “You think so? Did you see it in a vision or something?” She chuckled and whipped her eyes.

“You don’t believe me visions, do you?” Gellert asked amused.

“Divination is nonsense.” Hermione grumbled.

“Your friend Harry might back to differ.”

“But the prophecy about him only became true because Voldemort believed it and made it come true.” Hermione protested. “That’s not magic, that happens in the muggle world regularly too. It’s called a self-fulfilling prophecy.”

“Visions are a tricky thing.” Gellert agreed. “They can change at a moment’s notice or stay the same no matter how hard you try to change them.” His gaze got lost in the distance. “I saw the first atom bomb twenty years before it fell.”

Hermione gasped. “Why didn’t you do anything?”

Gellert laughed harshly. “Albus stopped me.” He saw her horror-stricken face and quickly clarified. “He didn’t know what he was doing; only trying to prevent an even bigger disaster in his eyes. Hundreds of muggle dead in Hiroshima or millions in the war I would start - that was probably his thought process. Maybe he even hoped my vision would be wrong, as I said fortune telling is a… tricky business. Who knows with my war I maybe could have been the reason for far more atom bombs to fall.” He sighed in expiration. “Albus did what he thought was right, as always.”

For a while there was silence.

“Mr. Grindelwald.” Hermione finally interrupted it. “Firenze - he’s the divination teacher of Harry and Ron - said the stars don’t care about petty things that happen on earth. That’s why you can only see something like a great war coming but not things like if you will stub your toe. But then why can you see things like me visiting Harry on the holidays?”

Gellert laughed. “What a delightfully interesting question. Yes, the stars care little about our petty concerns down on earth because they’re the stars. But us people down on earth with the right talents… our concerns can be far pettier and our visions fit our needs. You rarely see

anything like stubbing your toe but Albus and Riddle's plans for example… those are another thing."

Hermione nodded thoughtfully and looked back down on the parchment in front of her. "And… what do you see in our future?"

Gellert's gaze fell on the mirror in his room reflecting him with the Elderwand safely clasped in his hand standing across from Riddle. "Change." He answered truthfully. "I see change."

For months Gellert was waiting for the right moment. He had been trapped in his cell for decades a few weeks more or less wouldn't make a difference now and he refused to force Albus in something that could seriously endanger himself just so he'd exhaust himself.

But it seemed like Albus could do that very well on his own.

"No, no, no, no, I can't, I can't, don't make me, I don't want to..." Albus voice had never sounded so desperate in Gellert's ears. He jumped to his feet as soon as he could hear it and tried to go to him but that - verfluchtes! - magic field was keeping him from his soulmate.

"Albus?"

"It's all my fault, all my fault," he sobbed. "Please make it stop, I know I did wrong, oh please make it stop and I'll never, never again..."

The heartache in Albus' voice pushed tears in Gellert's eyes. "Albus!"

"Professor." Harry's voice came from close to the door separating Albus and Gellert. "We're nearly there, just a few more meters and it'll stop!"

"Severus!" Albus mumbled. "You need to get Severus!"

"Yes." Harry continued his calming mantra. "But first a few more steps."

"Please, please, please, no... not that, not that, I'll do anything..."

Finally they more or less fell through the door – Albus leaning on Harry with every step. They were only an arm's length away if Gellert could just reach for him.

"Albus, Liebling, come here!"

"Gellert?" For a moment Albus' gaze cleared while looking at him and he took a few stumbling steps towards him then he suddenly fell to his knees. "Don't hurt them, don't hurt them, please, please, it's my fault, hurt me instead..."

“Albus, sweetheart, I’m not hurting anyone.” Gellert was starting to get worried. “Please just come here.”

He wasn’t sure if it was the pull of the soulbond or pure desperation but Albus managed to get enough strength back to his arms to shuffle a bit forward and reach through the energy field. Gellert immediately took hold of his wrist and pulled his soulmate into his waiting arms.

“Oh, mein Liebster, what did you do to yourself, manchmal kann man dich echt nicht alleine lassen!”

“He drank a potion.” Harry explained hurriedly. “Something made by Voldemort. Dumbledore said it was made to slow him down and it nearly… it nearly…” Harry took a deep, shaky breath. “And it was all for nothing.”

Gellert didn’t have time for this useless stuttering. “Go get Severus!” He hissed at Harry. “He is the expert we have on potions after all, isn’t he?” Then he turned back to his soulmate who was still shaking and sobbing in his arms. “Shh, beloved, we’ll have you right as rain before you’ll know it even if you’re a colossal Schwachkopf!”

Albus sobbed. “My fault… Ariana…”

Gellert’s heart broke at the realization what caused his lover such pain. “It isn’t. It isn’t your fault Albus.”

Albus shook his head against his chest but seemed to be calming down. “My fault… if I hadn’t…”

“Stop taking the fault of the world on your shoulders.” Gellert was pulling them towards the bed. “It was my fault, at most that of your idiot brother.”

“Aberforth!” Albus mumbled. “Don’t hurt them…”

“I won’t.” Gellert pushed Albus into the sheets and sat down next to his shivering form. “I love you, I’d never harm you in any way, Liebling.”

“Gellert!” Albus for the first time looked like he actually saw the person in front of him. “Gellert!” His clammy hands searched for his soulmates – one of them had a deep cut and was still slightly bleeding. “Please don’t be dead.”

Gellert blinked, that seemed to be a new delusion. “I’m right here, Albus!”

“Please!” Albus eyes looked past the person in front of him. “Please there is so much blood… I didn’t mean to hurt you…”

“You didn’t…”

“The duel…” Albus interrupted and pushed himself upwards to be closer to Gellert. “I don’t want to hurt you… please Gellert!”

A dark, possessive part of Gellert was pleased by the notion that the duel between them had given Albus similar despair to the moment his sister died in front of his eyes. Still he needed to calm his lover down before he harmed himself further. He pulled one of his hands out of Albus' grasp and put it on his chest to push his soulmate back down unto the bed. "Sleep now Albus. Everything will be alright if you wake up." His fingers wandered down Albus chest to his belt were the Elderwand was securely held. Albus had always been careful until now to never bring his wand into the cell.

"Don't…" Albus mumbled but Gellert wasn't sure if it was about his imaginary dangers or the very real one in front of him.

He pulled the wand free and waved it once in front of Albus' face. "Sleep!"

Albus fell asleep.

"What he swallowed was the Drink of Despair." Severus explained to Gellert after a thorough examination of the still sleeping headmaster. "It introduces hallucination of the worst things a person has lived through but is otherwise a rather harmless poison."

"I wouldn't call Albus being delirious with fear especially harmless!" Gellert said in between gritted teeth.

"I mean there'll be no long-lasting consequences." Severus answered. "Just let him sleep for a few hours and the worst will be over. The thing most to worry about…" He hesitated but Gellert's glare made him continue rather quickly. "He'll probably have nightmares after having to live through all his traumas again."

"Don't worry." Gellert smiled down at Albus' sleeping form. "I'll keep the Albträume away from him!" A soft finger traced one of the paths the tears had left on Albus' cheeks.

"Gellert!" Severus sounded nervous. "The golden trio… Harry wants to know if they should continue with your plan."

"The plan." It took a second to rip himself away from Albus' face then it hit Gellert and he turned back to Severus with a raised eyebrow. "You knew about it?"

"I agree with it." Severus answered. "I agreed with your believes for years but…" He frowned and looked past Gellert at Albus. "I couldn't betray his trust like that. He's like a father to me."

"And now?"

"Albus is important to me." Severus reiterated and looked up in Gellert's eyes. "But it won't stop me from fighting for the future of my godsons. Lilly wouldn't have wanted for Harry to grow up in a world as harsh as this."

Gellert nodded slowly. “Tell them the plan shall be executed as discussed.”

“Professor McGonagall!” A little Gryffindor first year came running down the Great Hall at breakfast. “Professor McGonagall, the Grand staircase is filled with living chocolate frogs and they just won’t stop jumping on everyone and… and they are singing!”

“The stair case is what?” She quickly rose from the teacher’s table and hurried after the child.

Newt frowned as he followed the young boy down the suspiciously empty corridors of Hogwarts. “Are you sure Professor Dumbledore would be fine with me being here?”

“Yes!” The boy answered brusquely. “It’s just that the ministry won’t like you being here so he needs to stay under the radar.”

Newt frowned. “The what?”

“Muggle expression.” The boy answered. “Here we are.”

“This is… a girl’s bathroom.” Newt pointed out. He knew he wasn’t always the best at understanding human behavior but he was pretty sure this was considered weird.

“Come inside!” The boy took his arm and pulled him inside the bathroom. Then he started hissing at the sink and the sink… moved away.

Newt starred slack-jarred at the grand entrance that opened in front of him. “Astonishing! This is the entrance to the Chamber of Secrets?”

“Yes.” The boy answered proudly. “And the basilisk’s corpse it down there.”

Newt frowned down the big tube leading downwards.” And how will we able to get up again?”

“We won’t!” The boy answered before pushing him down the slide.

“It’s time!” Ron stood in front of Gellert’s cell.

Gellert was still drawing patterns up and down Albus naked torso with his wand. “Nearly finished.”

“What are you even doing?” The redhead asked nervously shifting his weight from one leg to the other.

“Making sure Albus can’t follow me and drag me back.” Gellert answered and finished the last rune he had drawn unto his lover. They looked quite pretty if he could say so himself and he couldn’t wait to look at his work in a more… intimate setting. If he ever got Albus to forgive him enough to let that happen again.

With a sigh Gellert stood up and stroked one last time over his sleeping soulmate’s cheek then he turned to the magical field. “If I were you,” he told Ron. “I would take several steps back.”

He had nearly made it out of the castle without getting recognized. The third Hallow - the invisibility cloak - was shielding Gellert from human eyes well enough that he started to believe himself undetectable. That was until he was half-way on the way to Hogsmead and a small creature started tugging on his cloak until it fell down enough to reveal Gellert.

“Grindelwald!” Newt Scramander clearly had seen better days: he was covered in dirt and grime, his hands and knees had obvious lesions and his hair was even more disheveled than usual. On the other hand - considering Newt’s job – the man had probably lived through far worse.

“Newt.” Gellert pulled the cloak fully off himself and secured it to his belt carefully before he turned with a pleasant smile and a raised Elderwand. “I thought we would be on first name basis after all those years.”

“What did you do to Albus?” Newt demanded to know with his own wand raised.

Gellert scoffed. “Really? You should know me better than to think I’d have harmed him.”

“I don’t trust your idea of harm.” Newt shot back. “You had no problem at attacking his friends and family back in the day.”

“I hadn’t considered you worthy of his friendship.” Gellert answered calmly. “But I have to admit I was wrong on that point. I promise to only do minor damage while defeating you.”

“That wand doesn’t belong to you anymore.” Newt nodded at the Elderwand. “Albus beat you in that last duel and a wand knows its true owner.”

“A wand knows its true owner by their soul.” Gellert agreed. “Now do you think it will be able to keep mine and Albus’ apart?”

It was a short duel. Gellert was kind enough to put an array of lights into the night sky over Newt's unconscious body so he could be found quickly.

Gellert's rule

Chapter Summary

Gellert and his new and old allies fight against Voldemort.

"My friends." Gellert loved these high-society parties the purebloods were holding regularly. It was just so easy to make connections with all those morons that were so easy to manipulate. And Draco's formal espousal to Harry was the perfect timing for a short speech.

All eyes turned to Gellert. Most pureblood families had decided to join the party – even a lot of death eaters though Gellert had made his position in the war clear. Narcissa even somehow managed to convince her sister Bellatrix to join them. Gellert had managed to have a few words with most people so far and he was pretty sure he knew how to convince them to his side.

"I'm happy to see you all on this most joyous occasion." Gellert continued with a goblet in his hand as if he wanted to make a toast. "Mr. Potter was one of my closest acquaintances for years." He smiled and made sure there was a sparkle in his eyes. "Not that he had much competition." There was a round of laughter in the room. "He and Mr. Malfoy were kind enough to give me this chance to introduce you all to the… group of friends I have been forming and our ideology."

It was like the lamps and the room had dimmed and suddenly it was quiet enough you could hear a pin drop.

"You're Dumbledore's soulmate." Mr. Carrow pointed out. "Doesn't that say everything about your and your friends ideology?"

"You may have noticed that my soulmate and I hadn't quite agreed in our ideology for a few years." Gellert answered with a raised eyebrow. "Since about… a century." Somebody laughed nervously. "Case and point that I'm here and Albus is stuck in Hogwarts."

"Is it a true?" A young girl about Draco's age asked. "That you trapped him there?"

"Well," Gellert raised the goblet to his lips to drink and smirked over the rim. "Turnabout is fair play as you British say."

The girl giggled nervously. Gellert's body may have aged but he hadn't lost all his charm yet.

"As I was saying." Gellert continued. "I wanted to talk to you about ideologies. I have been told many of you were passionate about changing the world for the better years ago and it is an honorable aim to have. I – as well – want to change the world but it seems to me like you have lost your way."

“This is blasphemy.” Bellatrix bit out. “Our lord will have you killed for even daring to doubt him.”

“Oh yes, Riddle.” Gellert looked down into the vine of his goblet and saw himself and Albus facing down Riddle together. He smiled. “I’ve met him when he was a teenager. Quiet clever boy, ambitious too and charming. I understand why you fought for him. To be honest I agreed with most of his aims but now…” He looked up and made sure to slowly look everyone in the room in the eyes. “He has become a shadow of himself; just take a look at his face.”

“He survived his own death.” Mr. Corban pointed out.

“He died to a baby.” Gellert replied snidely. “And look what became out of your great aims: hiding in the shadows not only from the muggles but your own kind. Hell you want to murder about a fifth of wizardkind.”

“They are mudbloods!” Bellatrix jumped up. “Death is what they deserve!”

“Our people are dying out.” Gellert replied calmly. “Magic presents us with a safe way to make sure we have enough of a selection of partners without resorting to incest or…” He pursed his lips. “marrying muggles by providing us with muggleborns and you throw its gift in the dirt.” He looked around the room. “What of the things you claim to fight for have you actually archived? Keep us safe from the muggles? Hardly they encroach more and more on our territory. Liberated the magical creatures suffering under the ministries grasp? They fear you about as much as them. Kept your families and children safe?” Gellert laughed. “Riddle killed his own soulmate what makes you think he would do anything to safe yours?”

“LIAR!” Bellatrix had drawn her wand. “How dare you talk this way about our lord?”

“Bella,” Narcissa stepped in between them and put a hand on the outstretched arm of her sister. “Please don’t make a scene.”

Bellatrix starred at her with a hateful glare, and then looked around herself. As she noticed that nobody was standing up to aid her she growled and rushed out of the room with her cloak dramatically bellowing up around her.

“Is it true?” Lucius asked contemplatively. “That the Dark Lord killed his own soulmate?” His gaze first landed on his wife, then fell to Draco and Harry holding hands close by.

Gellert smirked. “Yes, it’s sadly true. If you want I can give you proof.”

“Draco found a way to remove the Horcrux.”

Gellert looked at Harry in surprise. “He did? That would be a remarkable peace of magic if he managed it without killing you.”

“Oh, I’ll have to die.” Harry said in a blasé tone. “But only for a few seconds.”

“Still an impressive amount of magical work.”

Harry smiled in a way that reminded Gellert of Albus when his soulmate looked at him – love-stricken. “I guess my soulmate didn’t like that I had a piece of another ones soul in me. Got jealous.”

Gellert smiled back. “I’d probably have felt the same if it were Albus. So now…”

“Now we can kill Voldemort!”

Albus had been desperately researching how to get rid of the runs Gellert had put on his body that stopped him from leaving Hogwarts. Unfortunately nearly a century of work mostly focused on runes had made his soulmate the most proficient in his area of expertise. He closed the latest book he had apparently been studying for hours - if the low-lighting of his office had anything to say. With a sigh he buried his head in his hands.

“Albus.”

“Remus.” Albus didn’t raise his head. “Did Gellert send you?”

“No,” the werewolf answered. “I wanted to explain myself.”

Albus let out a sad laugh. “Have I been such a bad leader? You, Severus, Harry and his friends… have I failed you so much you preferred following GRINDELWALD?”

“You didn’t.” Remus replied softly. “You fought three wars successfully, you gave so many children a chance that had been forsaken by society; you gave me a life, a job, and friends even though most others would have liked to see me dead.”

“But…?” Albus finally looked up.

Remus was standing in the middle of his office with his hands clasped behind his back and shoulder’s pushed back. The picture of self-confidence – the opposite of the little boy that had once been so terrified of coming to Hogwarts because he might hurt someone.

“But…” Remus continued Albus’ sentence. “I think three wars made you terrified of ever truly fighting for anything that you could try to resolve peacefully; even if it will never be possible to resolve those things peacefully.”

“Werewolf rights…”

“…will never be possibility in this government.” Remus interrupted shaking his head. “They will never accept anything more than us not being downright hunted. They will not free the

house elves, they will not let the centaur's life peacefully in their forests, they will not give goblins the right to have a wand. They will not, Albus." Remus sighed sadly. "Unless we make them."

"Gellert's views on muggles…"

"…are horrific." Remus shrugged. "I know – we know. We will keep him controlled."

"You can't keep Gellert under control!" Albus protested.

"You seemed to do quite well for decades."

Albus looked at Remus with a quite unimpressed glare he had cultivated after years of teaching. "Apparently not good enough." He sighed again. "What does Sirius have to say about this? I doubt he'll be very happy."

"He isn't." Remus agreed finally seeming slightly uncomfortable. "I… I finally made him go to a mental recovery program in St. Mungos."

"Oh?" Albus raised an eyebrow. "I can't imagine he was very happy about that."

"He wasn't." Remus answered. "But it was for the best. He never quite recovered from the six months in aszkaban before I could rescue him. And to be honest the twelve years in hiding probably didn't help."

"I'm still astonished the two of you survived that ordeal."

"Upsides to being a werewolf I guess." Remus said.

"Albus?" A voice asked from the other side of the office door.

"Still angry at you, Gellert!" Albus shouted back.

The office door opened revealing his soulmate. The bastard had the audacity to look even more handsome since he was freed of his cell. The sunlight had brought a bit of a glow back to his skin and his clothing had become finer and perfectly fitted.

Gellert strode over to kneel in front of Albus's chair. "Darling, what can I do to win your forgiveness?" He took one of Albus' hands in his and started kissing each finger individually.

Remus cleared his throat loudly and took his cue to leave.

"You can free me from you spell!" Albus hissed back even though he started to feel his heart melt.

Gellert nuzzled Albus' hand with his cheek. "I gave you a bigger playing field than you granted me."

"I can't even go down to Hogsmead to visit my brother!" Albus complained.

“Good.” Gellert replied. “Your brother is a mean, old grunt who never truly appreciated you.”

“Stop insulting my brother!” Albus shouted. “And… and that isn’t the point.”

“Do not worry.” Gellert leaned forward to press a short kiss to Albus’ lips. “I will free you immediately after we won our fight. Just try to stay out of trouble until then.”

Hogwarts was looked more like a heap of ruins than a castle: Gellert could see caved in walls and stairs while climbing over one corpse after another. Most of them were adults, some were creatures of one kind or another, too many were children. A suit of armor missing one of its arms and its head was running past him with its weapon drawn.

Gellert’s teeth were clenched the entire time he needed to lead his people into the castle and down the floors to the Great hall. If somebody had hurt Albus…

Even from far away you could see the arches of light in different colors escaping from the hall only hidden by one of the giant doors hanging in its hinges. Gellert blew it away and stormed into the room.

Albus and Riddle both stopped in the middle of what seemed like a tense duel. One of the giant banners signifying the school houses (the blue one, Gellert freely admitted that he never cared enough to learn the names of the houses) fell to the ground onto what seemed like a cow wearing a dress for whatever reason.

“Gellert!” Albus shouted. He was disheveled and had a few superficial cuts in his face but seemed unharmed so far.

“Grindelwald!” Riddle growled.

“Mummy!” In the great hall a flock of children had hidden behind Albus and as they saw Gellert’s people following him in one of the younger girls started crying and ran towards a woman who let out a small sob and hugged her close.

Gellert watched the display for a second then walked over to Albus and turned to Riddle unperturbed. “This desperate attack was a mistake Riddle.”

Riddle laughed his high, unnatural laughter. “You’re a fool if you think you can beat me this easily. You may have the upper hand for now but I will come back stronger than ever before.”

“The horcruxes are gone.” Gellert answered in a pointedly bored voice. “No coming back from the dead this time. You ripped your soul apart for nothing.”

Riddle’s red eyes widened slightly then narrowed. “Do you know why I `ripped my soul apart` - as you called it - in the first place?” He scoffed. “It was because of you. Seeing you stuck in a cage of your own soulmate’s design, his German pet tiger.”

Gellert felt Albus shift nervously next to him and chuckled to calm his soulmate down. "You'll have a hard time finding a German tiger, maybe you should use the wolf as an animal in your metaphor."

Riddle ignored him. "You could have reached true greatness but let yourself be chained down to… THAT!" He spit the last word out. "I killed my soulmate because I didn't want to be as pathetic as YOU!"

"And now look at yourself." Gellert answered. "You lost the last chance at love you had in this world, you lost your good-looks, your charm, your supporters." Gellert raised the Elderwand. "And now you will lose your life."

Albus raised his wand next to his. Riddle raised his own.

"Avada Kedavra." Gellert and Riddle spoke at the same time.

Albus used his charm to levitate a stone in the way of Riddle's spell since there was no magical shield that could protect Gellert from the killing curse. Riddle moved out of the way of Gellert's curse but he hadn't anticipated the dozens of curses coming from both Gellert's people and the children still standing behind Albus.

As Gellert saw that Riddle had stopped breathing he turned back to his soulmate with a triumphant smile. "Well, that was easy. I…"

"Petrificus Totalus!"

Gellert hadn't had anticipated an attack out of his own ranks and the curse hit him at full force. He became completely stiff and would have landed face-first on the ground if Albus hadn't caught him.

"What…?" Albus looked up searchingly for Gellert's attacker with one hand gripping his wand ready to defend himself.

Harry Potter was standing at the head of the crowd of Gellert's followers who… didn't seem very bothered by their leader being attacked at all. Some of the pure blood families who had left Voldemort's ranks looked slightly uncomfortable but they were held back by a hand or a word from their children, nephews and nieces and the people that had joined Gellert's movement from the order of the phonenix.

They weren't Gellert's people. They were Harry's.

"I apologize Professor Dumbledore." Harry actually looked apologetic. "Both for betraying you a year ago and freeing Mr. Grindelwald as well as for letting Voldemort attack the school. I promise we mean neither you nor your soulmate any harm but I fear I need to insist that both of you retire immediately from what you were doing."

"But…" Albus was flabbergasted. "…you were the one to free Gellert."

Harry laughed. "Of course we did, he was the best way we had to get the purebloods on our side. The best way to weaken Voldemort was to have someone like him but better on our side.

But you didn’t honestly believe we would let him have the blood bath he wanted.” Harry shook his head. “Magic will be revealed to the world but we will do it our way.”

He walked over to Gellert to take the Elderwand from his hand. The cloak of invisibility hung from his shoulders and the stone of resurrection was fastened to his belt. The true Master of Death.

Gellert and Albus were lying on the grass next to the lake which was reflecting the Hogwarts castle back to them. Albus head was resting on Gellert’s chest and Gellert was tracing random patterns in his soulmates hair. “Retired, mh? We have gotten old, Albus.”

Albus chuckled quietly. “Speak of yourself, I live in the believe that you have to grow up, not grow old.”

Gellert smiled. “Which you show in your incessant love for sweets and terrible wardrobe.”

“And bad jokes.” Albus answered. “Don’t forget the bad jokes.”

“How could I.” Gellert took a deep breath of Albus’ smell mixed with the grass around him and the water a few meters away. He nearly believed he could smell the sun too.

“Gellert,” Albus voice had become serious again. “We should…”

“We should nothing.” Gellert interrupted. “We are retired, haven’t you heard?”

“But the war against the muggles…”

“…will either happen or it will not and we can do nothing about it.” Gellert answered calmly. “It’s time that we let the younger generation step up. Give them space to grow.”

Albus huffed. “When did you become so wise?”

“After a century with you, I guess.”

“Flatterer.” Albus took Gellert’s hand in his and raised both of them up in front of the sky. “And what DO you want to do now except not getting involved?”

“Let’s travel.” Gellert smiled. “Albus we have lived all our lives caged in one way or another by each other. Let’s be free.”

“The runes you put on me…”

“One wave of my wand and they’re gone.”

Albus put both their joined hands down again over his own heart. Gellert felt it beating under his palm. “And where would you like to go?”

“I don’t know. Italy, Japan, Africa.” Gellert answered. “Wherever the wind carries us.”

“Yes.”

“Yes?”

“Yes.” Albus turned his head so he could kiss Gellert. “Let’s be free.”

End Notes

1)Did I think to myself: "Oh Grindwald is german and german is my native tongue so should I use all the german in this FF?" Yes, yes I did.
Would you like a translation in my notes or do you like the mystery of it?

2) this is a story you could write several books about condensed in a 4 chapter-one shot. If you'd like clarification or more elaboration on a story point or character I mention I'll try to accommodate either in this FF or maybe I'll write another one-shot about it. Depends on how interested you all are.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!